

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /083 W

-----074279 101635Z /11

O 101628Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7754

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 13460

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINT, MR, BE

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM'S REACTION TO  
THE COUP

1. THE MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM AND THE EC,  
AHMEDOU OULD ABDALLAH, FORMER MINISTER OF TRADE AND  
FORMER AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, GAVE US HIS INITIAL,  
TENTATIVE REACTIONS TO THE COUP IN NOUAKCHATT.

2. HE VIEWED THE COUP AS A RESPONSE OF MAURITANIA'S  
MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ESTABLISHMENT TO THE WEAK RULE OF  
PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND A REACTION AGAINST THE LEFTIST  
GROUP AROUND THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE AND THE MINISTER OF  
FISHERIES.

3. HE SAID THE LEADERS OF THE COUP WERE CLEARLY PRO-  
WESTERN, ANTI-ALGERIAN BUT ALSO WOULD OPPOSE EXTENSION  
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OF MORROCAN HEDGEMONY IN MAURITANIA. FOR THAT REASON,  
HE THOUGHT THAT THE NEW GROUP'S FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE  
ABOUT THE SAME AS REGARDS MORROCAN-ALGERIAN-SAHARAN  
PROBLEM BUT THAT THEY WOULD CUT OUT SOME OF THE FASHIONABLE  
LEFTIST POLICIES (E.G., PRO-NORTH KOREAN) PUSHED BY EX-  
PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S WIFE.

4. AS FOR THE PERSONALITIES IDENTIFIED WITH THE COUP, MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR THOUGHT REPORTED COUP-LEADER MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALEK WAS ABLE BUT OFTEN INDECISIVE. HE CHARACTERIZED EX-MINISTER OF DEFENSE, COL. M'BAREK OULD BOUNA MOKAR, WITH WHOM HE HAD SERVED BRIEFLY IN WASHINGTON, AS "STUPID." AMBASSADOR SAID THAT KEY INDICATOR OF QUALITY OF NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD BE WHETHER THE ABLE COMMANDER IN THE NORTH, HAIDALLA KHOUNA, AND HIS DEPUTY, JIDDOU MOHAMMED SALEK, WERE INCLUDED. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD US THAT HIS FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD DEPEND IN PART ON WHETHER HIS COUSIN, THE MILITARY COMMANDER IN NOUAKCHOTT, WAS INVOLVED IN THE COUP.

5. DURING OUR CONVERSATION, THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TELEPHONED THE MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS AND SUGGESTED TO THE MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR THAT HE MAKE NO STATEMENTS ON THE COUP FOR 24-48 HOURS UNTIL THE SITUATION CLARIFIES. AMBASSADOR OULD ABDULLAH TOLD US THAT HE HAD HEARD RUMORS OF AN IMPENDING COUP SINCE DECEMBER BUT THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN MAURITANIA HAD DELAYED THE COUP'S IMPLEMENTATION.

5. PLEASE INCLUDE EMBASSY BRUSSELS AS AN ADDRESSEE AS APPROPRIATE. DE TARR

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## Message Attributes

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